

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please cancel claims 1-17. The claims are as follows:

1 - 17 (CANCELLED)

18. (ORIGINAL) A refractory metal liner, comprising:

a barrier comprising a passivating agent, said barrier impeding a subsequent reaction of at least a top half of said refractory metal liner with an adjacent conductive layer, an amount of said passivating agent in said barrier being less than an amount necessary to form a stoichiometric combination of said refractory metal liner and said passivating agent.

19. (ORIGINAL) The refractory metal liner in claim 18, wherein said barrier is positioned in a central portion of said refractory metal.

20. (ORIGINAL) The refractory metal liner in claim 19, wherein said barrier impedes impurities from diffusing from said first conductive layer through said refractory metal.

21. (ORIGINAL) The refractory metal liner in claim 20, wherein said impurities comprise silicon impurities.

22. (ORIGINAL) The refractory metal liner in claim 19, wherein a second conductive layer is positioned over said refractory metal, said barrier impeding impurities from diffusing from said

second conductive layer through said refractory metal.

23. (ORIGINAL) The refractory metal liner in claim 22, wherein said impurities comprise fluorine impurities.

24. (ORIGINAL) The refractory metal liner in claim 22, wherein:  
said refractory metal comprises one of tungsten, titanium, molybdenum and nickel; and  
said passivating agent comprises one or more of nitrogen and chlorine.

25. (ORIGINAL) An electrical connection in an integrated circuit chip, said electrical connection comprising:

a first conductive layer;

a liner on said first conductive layer, said liner including a barrier, said barrier impeding impurities from diffusing from said first conductive layer through said liner; and

a second conductive layer over said liner, wherein said barrier impedes said impurities from diffusing from said second conductive layer through said liner.

26. (ORIGINAL) The electrical connection in claim 25, wherein said barrier comprises a concentration of a passivating agent less than an amount necessary to form a stoichiometric combination with said liner.

27. (ORIGINAL) The electrical connection in claim 26, wherein:  
said refractory metal comprises one of tungsten, titanium, molybdenum and nickel;

said passivating agent comprises one or more of nitrogen and chlorine; and

said second conductive layer comprises one of tungsten and copper.

28. (ORIGINAL) The electrical connection in claim 25, wherein said impurities comprise one or more of silicon impurities and fluorine impurities.

29. (ORIGINAL) An integrated circuit chip comprising:

a first conductive layer;

a liner on said first conductive layer, said liner including a barrier, said barrier impeding impurities from diffusing from said first conductive layer through said liner,

a second conductive layer over said liner, wherein said barrier impedes said impurities from diffusing from said second conductive layer through said liner.

30. (ORIGINAL) The integrated circuit chip in claim 29, wherein said barrier comprises a concentration of a passivating agent less than an amount necessary to form a stoichiometric combination with said liner.

31. (ORIGINAL) The integrated circuit chip in claim 30, wherein:

said refractory metal comprises one of tungsten, titanium, molybdenum and nickel;

said passivating agent comprises one or more of nitrogen and chlorine; and

said second conductive layer comprises one of tungsten and copper.

32. (ORIGINAL) The integrated circuit chip in claim 29, wherein said impurities comprise

one or more of silicon impurities and fluorine impurities.